

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 15th February, 2011

Present:- **Councillors** Simon Allen, Rob Appleyard, Sharon Ball, Tim Ball, Colin Barrett, Gabriel Batt, Cherry Beath, David Bellotti, John Bull, Neil Butters, Bryan Chalker, Anthony Clarke, Victor Clarke, Nicholas Coombes, Chris Cray, Paul Crossley, Gerry Curran, Colin Darracott, Sally Davis, Douglas Deacon, Ian Dewey, David Dixon, Terry Gazzard, Charles Gerrish, Ian Gilchrist, Francine Haeberling, Alan Hale, Malcolm Hanney, Nathan Hartley, David Hawkins, Lynda Hedges, Steve Hedges, Adrian Inker, Eleanor Jackson, Les Kew, Malcolm Lees, Barry Macrae, Shaun McGall, Marian McNeir MBE, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE, Bryan Organ, Carol Paradise, Vic Pritchard, Caroline Roberts, Nigel Roberts, Dine Romero, Will Sandry, Brian Simmons, David Speirs, Shirley Steel, Roger Symonds, Martin Veal, Tim Warren, Chris Watt, Brian Webber, John Whittock, Stephen Willcox and Gordon Wood

Apologies for absence: Councillors Peter Edwards and Andrew Furse

70 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting including the members of the public seated in the overflow facility in the Banqueting Room and drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure set out on the agenda which was read out.

71 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of - the previous ordinary meeting of the Council held on 16th November 2010; the special meeting also held on 16th November 2010; the special meeting held on 2nd December 2010; and the special meeting held on 20th January 2011 - be each approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Divisional Director Legal and Democratic Services advised Members orally on the issues they needed to consider in reaching a decision on whether they had an interest to declare in the matters on the agenda for this meeting.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the report on the Budget and Council Tax (agenda item 8) as Chair of NHS Bath and North East Somerset Primary Care Trust.

Councillor Rob Appleyard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the report on the Budget and Council Tax (agenda item 8) relating to the possible sale of land agreed as a Trustee of the Somer Community Housing Trust.

Councillor Rob Appleyard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the report on the Budget and Council Tax (agenda item 8) relating to the budget scrutiny as the Vice-Chair of the Norton Radstock Town Council.

Councillor Appleyard indicated that he would vacate the Council Chamber and not take part in the discussion and voting on those matters.

Councillor Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst declared a personal interest in the report on the Budget and Council Tax (agenda item 8) relating to the proposed Liberal Democrat amendment on the Bath Transportation Package funding, as her home was near the route, and indicated that she would vacate the Council Chamber and not take part in the discussion and voting on that amendment, and on the Budget agenda item.

73 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman:

1. Announced that in the 2011 UK Youth Parliament Elections, Mike Fidanoglu from Beechen Cliff School had been elected MYP for Bath with Fiona Collier, Hayesfield School as deputy and that Alec Howells, Writhlington School had been elected MYP for North East Somerset with Shyam Sawhney, Norton Hill School as deputy.
2. Informed Council of the recent death of Mrs Kate Scully MBE, formerly youth worker in the DAFBY team (Democratic Action for B&NES Youth) and invited the Council to place on record condolences to her family and colleagues and indicated that her funeral would take place on Friday 25 February 2011.
3. Encouraged all Councillors who had not done so already, to purchase their tickets for the Charity Ball taking place on the opening night of the Bath Comedy Festival on 1 April.
4. Asked everyone to turn off their mobile phone or switch it to silent to avoid disrupting the meeting and because of the possibility of interference with the sound system or the videolink to the Banqueting Room.
5. Referred to the agenda item timings on the briefing sheet for this meeting which had been agreed with the Group Leaders and asked Councillors to keep contributions to debate brief and relevant and not to repeat what had already been said by colleagues.
6. Informed Council that, in the absence of the Vice-Chairman, she had asked Councillor Bryan Chalker, Immediate Past Chairman, to assist with the speakers' list for this meeting.
7. Indicated that she proposed to waive Council Rule 37, so as not to permit Councillors seconding motions or amendments being able to reserve their right to speak until later in the debate, but to require all seconders, if they wished to

speak, to do so when they had seconded the motion or amendment. The Council indicated its agreement.

8. *Indicated that she would announce a comfort break between 8pm and 9pm if the meeting did not appear to be near its conclusion by then.*

74 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business for this meeting.

75 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ms Tracey Quinn made a statement in support of a petition signed by residents in the Kingsway area of Oldfield Ward in Bath urging the Council to provide and stock grit bins at strategic locations in the area to enable local residents to grit roads and pedestrian areas during icy weather.

In response to a question from Councillor Will Sandry, Ms Quinn said that two of the most difficult road junctions in the area would significantly exceed the criterion of 200 vehicle movements per day used to allocate grit bins.

In response to a question from Councillor John Bull, Ms Quinn said that she was aware that, in deciding on the location of grit bins, the road gradient is measured but that in many cases the pavements had a steeper slope which made them impassable in bad weather and this needed to be taken into account as well.

Ms Quinn was thanked for her statement and for presenting the petition which was referred for consideration and response to the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery. A copy of the statement provided by the speaker which was circulated at the meeting is held on file in the minute book and published on the Council's website with the draft minutes of this meeting.

76 MEDIUM TERM SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING 2011/12 TO 2013/14, AND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2011/12

The Council considered a report setting out the recommendations of the Cabinet on the review of the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period to 2013/2014 and the Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax for 2011/12 (Report 8).

In addition to the reports circulated with the agenda, all Councillors received a copy of the draft minute of the Corporate Performance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel meeting held on 31st January with the panel's comments on the Budget proposals.

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haerberling seconded by Councillor Les Kew it was **RESOLVED** that the Council suspends Council Rule 42, Content and Length of Speeches, for the duration of this debate to enable variations to

be permitted to the length of the speeches by the Cabinet Member for Resources, the Liberal Democrat Group, Labour and Independent Group Leaders and the Chair of the Corporate Performance and Resources O&S Panel.

On a motion from Councillor Malcolm Hanney seconded by Councillor Francine Haerberling it was **RESOLVED** that the Council:

1. Approves:
 - a) The General Fund net revenue budget for 2011/12 of £121.742m with no increase in Council Tax.
 - b) That no Special Expenses be charged other than Town and Parish Council precepts for 2011/12.
 - c) The adequacy of reserves at Appendix 1 Table 9 with a risk-assessed level of £10.5m.
 - d) The individual service cash limits for 2011/12 summarised at Appendix 1 Table 5 and detailed in Annex 1.
 - e) That the specific arrangements for the governance and release of corporate headroom (which includes any amounts for which the purpose has not been specified in the budget report in relation to transfers to revenue budget contingency, the ongoing headroom allocations and the one off headroom allocations in Appendix 1) be delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Chief Executive together with the Chair of the CPR Overview & Scrutiny Panel.
2. Agrees to include the precepts set and approved by other bodies including the Local Precepts of Town Councils, Parish Councils and the Charter Trustees of the City of Bath, and those of the Fire and Police Authorities in its Council Tax setting.
3. Acknowledges the Section 151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed Budget and the adequacy of the Council's Reserves (Report 8, Appendix 1, Annex 2) and approves the conditions upon which the recommendations are made as set out throughout Appendix 1 of Report 8.
4. That in relation to the Capital Budget the Council:
 - a) Approves a Capital Programme of £34.108m for 2011/12 and notes indicative items shown in italics for 2011/12 and the Programme for 2012/13 to 2015/16 as shown at Appendix 1, Annex 3 of Report 8 including the planned sources of funding.
 - b) Approves the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy as shown at Appendix 1, Annex 4 of Report 8.

c) Approves the Capital Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 1 Table 7 of Report 8.

5. Notes the O&S review of Medium Term Service and Resource Plans and 2011/12 Service Action Plans and instructs the relevant officers to finalise and publish their Medium Term Service and Resource Plans and Service Action Plans by the end of March 2011, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and in light of feedback from the O&S reviews, and in line with the approved cash limits.

6. Agrees to earmark an additional £40k (from the £105k one-off headroom allocation to introduce a community enablement programme to support provision of Youth Services) to support Keynsham Time Out and Radstock Youth Centre during the transition period, recognising that the two youth centres have each already been allocated £15k following the Council resolution of 16 November, 2010 and that this £40k funding shall be allocated as follows:

- £20k to Keynsham Time Out to support the work being undertaken by Keynsham Town Council to continue to provide youth services in the town; and
- £20k to pay for a managed transition at Radstock Youth Centre, in consultation with Radstock Youth Partnership.

7. Agrees to reinstate funding of £14k to the Shout Out advocacy service and £8k to Bath Contact Centre. The funding for this shall be allocated from the £336k one-off headroom allocation to support disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects.

8. Agrees to reinstate funding of £110k to support carers' activities including short breaks for disabled, vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The funding for this shall be allocated from the £336k one-off headroom allocation to support disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects.

9. Agrees to allocate £60k to support the ongoing costs of maintaining and opening Victoria Hall during the transition to the new town and parish councils. The funding for this shall be allocated from the £336k one-off headroom allocation to support disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects.

10. Agrees to ask the Cabinet to consider allocating £30k to resource extra hours for Family Support Workers for home learning for children aged 0-3 who have complex medical needs and disabilities and to consider allocating the funding for this from the £336k one-off headroom allocation to support disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects.

11. Agrees to ask the Cabinet to consider allocating £50k (from the £1,736k ongoing Revenue Budget Contingency) to enable Children's Services to work in partnership with schools to continue to provide some Parent Support Advisors. These staff would be managed from the Children's Centres to

provide support for families with pre-school children previously identified as vulnerable and disadvantaged, and to work with these families as these children make the transition from Children's Centres to primary school and to continue to work with them in the primary school setting.

12. Approves the technical resolutions that are derived from the Budget Report, and all the figures in that Report and including the precepts for Town Councils, Parish Councils and other precepting bodies as set out in Appendix 4 of Report 8.

THE COUNCIL APPROVES THE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX FOR 2011/2012 AS INDICATED ABOVE AND ACCORDINGLY RESOLVES THAT:

13.. The revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1 Annex 1 to the report be approved.

14. The 2011/12 capital budget as set out in Appendix 1 Annex 3 to the report be approved.

15. That the Council's total net expenditure for 2011/12 be set at **£121.557m¹** (including a contribution of £1.736m net to reserves), or £119.822m excluding the contribution to reserves. That the 2011/12 expenditure is funded as follows:

	Total £	Per Band D (£)
2011/12 Gross Expenditure	349,160,132	5,419.81
2011/12 Income (excluding recharges)	-229,338,550	-3,559.89
2011/12 Net Expenditure	119,821,582	1,859.92
Funded by:		
Use of Balances (- is net contribution)	-1,735,568	-26.94
£1.736m contribution		
Revenue Support Grant £10.280452m	43,539,450	675.84
Business Rate Pool £33.258998m		
Collection fund surplus	591,000	9.17
Total	42,394,882	658.07
Raised from Council Tax	77,426,700	1,201.85
Total Funding	119,821,582	1,859.92

16. (a) That it be noted that on 14th January 2011 the Divisional Director of Finance (as authorised Section 151 Officer) agreed **64,422.90** Band D property equivalent as the Council Tax base for the year 2011/12 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(b) The amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for

¹ This is net of the Dedicated Schools Grant of £113.801m and the Council Tax Freeze Grant of £1.920m

dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate is given as Annex 1 (1). *[Annex 1 (1) gives Band D Tax base by parish]*

17. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the 2011/12 financial year in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:

(a) **£121,842,672** (=119,821,582 (net expenditure) +2,021,090 (Parish precepts)) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.

[This is the net expenditure incurred in performing functions and charged to revenue account, contingencies for revenue, any financial reserves to be raised, financial reserves to meet prior year deficit not yet provided for and any amounts transferred from general fund to collection fund under section 98(5) of 1988 Act.]

(b) **-£1,735,568** (contribution to balances) the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a) to (c) of the Act.

[This is sums estimated to be payable into the general fund other than RSG and NNDR, transfers from the collection fund to the general fund and financial reserves used to provide for items in Section 32(2) including income]

(C) **£123,578,240** being the amount by which the aggregate at 6(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 6(b) above calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act as its **budget requirement** for the year.

(d) **£ 44,130,450** (£43,539,450 Revenue support grant and business rate pool plus collection fund surplus £591,000) being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant or additional grant, increased by the amount which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund.

[Adjustments to be made to this figure for transfers from Collection Fund to or from General Fund in accordance with Sections 97(3) and 97(4) and 98(5) and 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. This is the RSG, NNDR grant payable plus/minus collection fund surplus/deficit for Council Tax]

(e) **£ 1,233.22** being the amount at 6© above less the amount at 6(d) divided by the amount at 5(a) above, calculated in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year.

[This is the average Council tax including B&NES and parish precepts]

(f) **£ 2,021,090** being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

[This is the total of parish precepts]

(g) **£1,201.85** being the amount at 6(e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 6(f) above by the amount at 5 (a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of

its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

[This is the B&NES Council tax only excluding parish precepts]

(h) The amounts given by adding to the amount at 6(g) above the amounts of special items or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned in Annex 1(1) divided in each case by the amount at 5 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate are given at Annex 1 (2).

[Annex 1 (2) gives parish precepts and the Band D Council tax for the parish precept]

(i) The amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 6(g) and 6(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 7(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands are given in Annex 1 (3).

[Annex 1 (3) shows the B&NES and parish Council Tax for all bands.]

Precepting Authorities

18. That it be noted that for the year 2011/12 Avon and Somerset Police Authority met on 9 February 2011 to determine the amount in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:-

19. Avon and Somerset Police Authority Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£112.02	£130.69	£149.36	£168.03	£205.37	£242.71	£280.05	£336.06

20. That it be noted that for the year 2011/12 Avon Fire Authority met on 11 February 2011 to determine the amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:-

21. Avon Fire Authority Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£40.25	£46.96	£53.67	£60.38	£73.80	£87.22	£100.63	£120.76

22. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts 8, 10 and 6(i) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the 2011/12 financial year for each of the categories of dwellings shown, as listed in Annex 1 (4).

23. On average (for a Band D, 2 adult household) the Council Tax for 2011/12 will be as follows:

<i>Reference Band D 2010/11 £</i>		£ Band D 2011/12	% Increase on 2010/11
1,201.85	Bath and North East Somerset Council	1,201.85	0.00
31.07	Average Parish Precept	31.37	0.97
60.38	Avon Fire Authority	60.38	0.00
168.03	Avon and Somerset Police Authority	168.03	0.00
1,461.33	Total Tax charged	1,461.63	0.02

[Overall annual increase in average Band D Council Tax is £0.30]

*(Notes: 1. The above motion was carried with 31 Councillors voting in favour, 26 Councillors voting against and with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.
2. An amendment was moved on behalf of the Labour Group by Councillor John Bull which was accepted by the mover and seconder of the motion. The wording of the amendment is incorporated in paragraphs 6. to 11. of the resolution above.*

3. An amendment was moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group by Councillor David Dixon seconded by Councillor Caroline Roberts to remove £7M Bath Transportation Package funding from the capital programme and to invest the £400K revenue released in local transport initiatives and safer routes to schools; and to earmark from the headroom allocated to revenue budget contingency - £50K for a home to school transport co-ordinator; £150K for Youth Service ongoing allocation; £50K to offset reductions in grants to Children`s Services voluntary bodies; and £25K for the World Heritage Site Management Plan. That amendment was not carried with 22 Councillors voting in favour, 31 Councillors voting against and with 4 Councillors abstaining from voting.

3. An amendment was moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group by Councillor Dine Romero seconded by Councillor Nigel Roberts to allocate from the revenue contingency fund £400K to improve capacity for removing the various waste streams from residential properties and enhance gritting and winter resilience capacity. That amendment was not carried with 23 Councillors voting in favour, 34 Councillors voting against and with no Councillors abstaining from voting.

4. An amendment was moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group by Councillor Roger Symonds seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath to allocate £400K from the LTP capital budget as a high priority to improve cycle provision and create 20 mph residential zones. That amendment was not carried with 23 Councillors voting in favour, 30 Councillors voting against and with 4 Councillors abstaining from voting.)

77 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2011/12

The Council considered a report on the policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to their security and liquidity set out in the Treasury Management Strategy and the Annual Investment Strategy.

On a motion from Councillor Malcolm Hanney seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish it was **RESOLVED** that the Council approves:

1. The actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Appendix 1 to Report 9).
2. The borrowing and debt rescheduling strategy as detailed in Appendix 1.
3. The Investment Strategy as detailed in Appendix 2 to Report 9.
4. The changes to the authorised lending lists detailed in Appendix 2.
5. The decision not to commit to a local authority bond issue to fund capital programmes prior to 9th May 2011.

(Notes. 1. The above resolution was carried by a majority of Councillors voting in favour with no Councillors voting against and no Councillors abstaining from voting.

2. The wording in paragraph 5. of the resolution was added on an amendment from Councillor Tim Ball on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group which was accepted by the mover and seconder of the motion.)

78 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were seven questions from Members of the Council as listed in Annex 2 to these minutes. The questions asked and answers given in writing as circulated at the meeting are held on file in the minute book and published on the Council's website with the draft minutes of this meeting.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement on the Council's planning enforcement policy urging that resources be made available to enable a sufficient number of qualified staff to be employed to deal with enforcement matters throughout the Council's area. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery for consideration and response.

Councillor Will Sandry withdrew his request to make a statement about the Council's policy on the provision of grit bins as he had raised this matter in the debate on the Budget and Council Tax report earlier in the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.07 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

STATEMENT OF TRACEY QUINN TO COUNCIL MEETING 15TH FEBRUARY 2011

ON GRITTING POLICY

Address: 95 Households in **Stirtingale Road, Kingsway, Bath**

32 households in **Stirtingale Avenue, Kingsway, Bath**

23 Households in **Kingsway Road**

B&NES Statement:- The B&NES ethos for members of the Public to express their point of view is via a petition. B&NES website states:-

“Petitions are a way in which the public can let the Council know of their concerns or views. As distinct from other forms of communication, a petition is normally signed by a number of people sharing the same concern or offering the same point of view.”

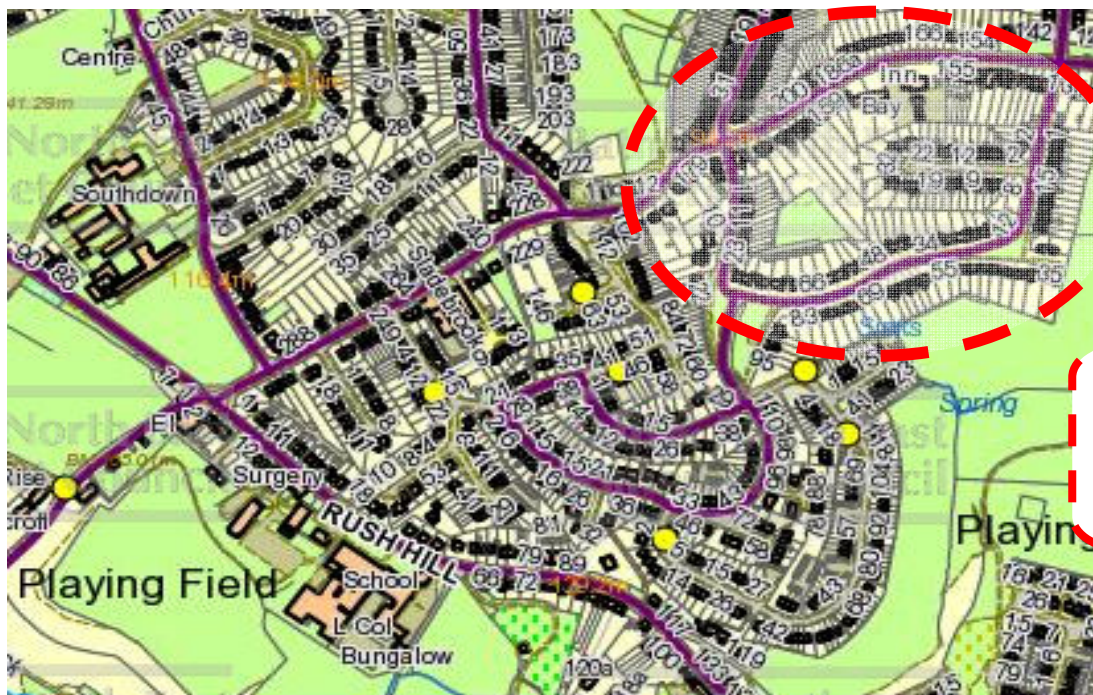
Kingsway Residents Point of View:

- B&NES should provide residents of Stirtingale Road, Stirtingale Avenue and Kingsway Road the means with which to grit the road and pedestrian areas which are left unusable by not being gritted properly by B&NES Council.
- This has been an ongoing request for these support Grit Bins to be provided

Stirtingale Road – 77 Households signed petition, **2** Declined, **16** Unavailable to respond

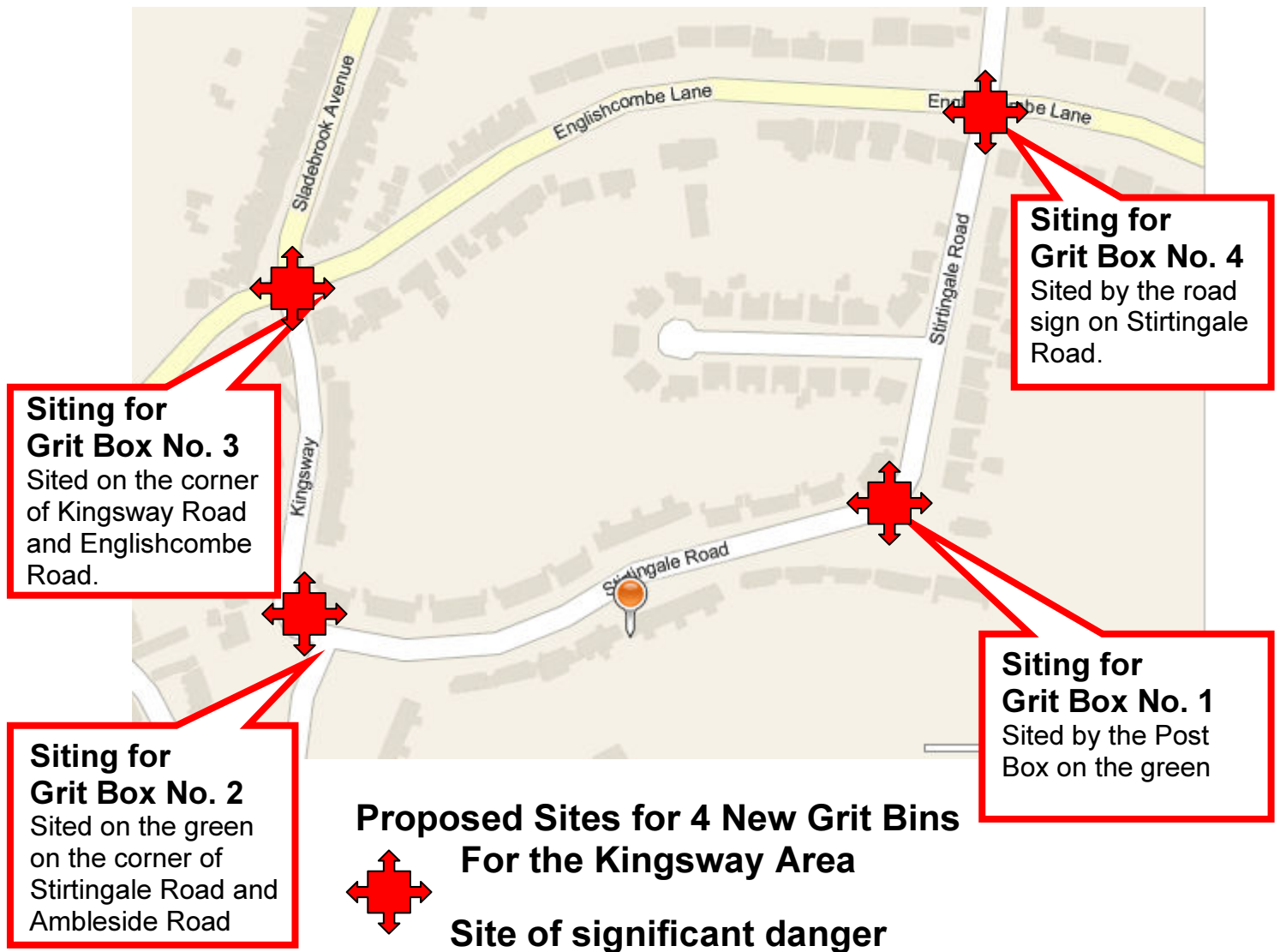
Stirtingale Avenue – 29 signed petition, **3** Unavailable to respond

Kingsway Road- 18 signed petition, **5** Unavailable to respond



**Area Not
currently covered
by B&NES Grit
Bins**

This Map indicates (in yellow) current sites of B&NES Grit Bins



• **Conclusion:-**

- We, the residents of the Kingsway area need the means with which to keep the community mobile when the roads become impacted with ice.
- We, the residents of the Kingsway area have extended local knowledge of the road junctions indicated being dangerous and need extra gritting.
- We, the residents of the Kingsway area recognise that B&NES have been unable, at times, to grit our roads because of impacted ice – I personally witnessed a Grit vehicle partly losing control at one of the bends in the road near my house.
- We, the residents of the Kingsway area have already established that there were a number of grit bins in our area but these were taken away without any discussions with the residents or alternative arrangements being made.
- **We, the residents of the Kingsway area need our Grit Bins put back and kept restocked by B&NES for the safety of all the residents**

Band D Tax Base Bath and North East Somerset Council Annex 1 (1)

Town/Parish/City of:-	Tax Base
Bath	31,735.87
Bathampton	751.34
Batheaston	1,131.75
Bathford	807.09
Cameley	454.70
Camerton	260.66
Charlcombe	209.14
Chelwood	61.31
Chew Magna	593.84
Chew Stoke	450.77
Claverton	66.18
Clutton	570.97
Combe Hay	91.56
Compton Dando	285.60
Compton Martin	247.95
Corston	201.10
Dunkerton	227.46
East Harptree	309.29
Englishcombe	135.42
Farmborough	438.39
Farrington Gurney	336.31
Freshford	285.77
High Littleton	798.26
Hinton Blewett	139.22
Hinton Charterhouse	234.58
Kelston	81.25
Keynsham	5,610.56
Marksbury	185.50
Midsomer Norton	3,741.74
Monkton Combe	160.28
Nempnett Thrubwell	92.94
Newton St. Loe	73.00
North Stoke	43.92
Norton Malreward	106.03
Paulton	1,792.13
Peasedown St. John	2,204.49
Priston	121.76
Publow	468.08
Radstock	1,708.33
St. Catherine	39.96
Saltford	1,830.28
Shoscombe	165.11
South Stoke	233.55
Stanton Drew	328.45
Stowey Sutton	602.48

Town/Parish/City of:-	Tax Base
Swainswick	130.22
Timsbury	972.93
Ubley	167.92
Wellow	248.59
West Harptree	204.52
Westfield	1,821.19
Whitchurch	463.16
TOTAL	64,422.90

Annex 1 (2)

Charter Trust / Parish Council Tax Rates 2011/12

Parish/Charter Trust/Town Council	Precept £	Tax base	Band D £
Bath	208,900	31735.87	6.58
Bathampton	24,000	751.34	31.94
Batheaston	33,000	1131.75	29.16
Bathford	18,560	807.09	23.00
Cameley	18,000	454.70	39.59
Camerton	10,000	260.66	38.36
Charlcombe	1,500	209.14	7.17
Chelwood	550	61.31	8.97
Chew Magna	21,500	593.84	36.21
Chew Stoke	15,000	450.77	33.28
Claverton	3,500	66.18	52.89
Clutton	14,498	570.97	25.39
Combe Hay	8,000	91.56	87.37
Compton Dando	7,009	285.60	24.54
Compton Martin	9,500	247.95	38.31
Corston	7,500	201.10	37.29
Dunkerton	6,677	227.46	29.35
East Harptree	8,000	309.29	25.87
Englishcombe	4,295	135.42	31.72
Farmborough	14,000	438.39	31.94
Farrington Gurney	11,500	336.31	34.19
Freshford	13,685	285.77	47.89
High Littleton	23,000	798.26	28.81
Hinton Blewett	4,285	139.22	30.78
Hinton Charterhouse	7,107	234.58	30.30
Kelston	1,500	81.25	18.46
Keynsham	435,109	5610.56	77.55
Marksbury	5,400	185.50	29.11
Midsomer Norton	330,994	3741.74	88.46
Monkton Combe	3,600	160.28	22.46
Nempnett Thrubwell	1,700	92.94	18.29
Newton St. Loe	3,250	73.00	44.52
North Stoke	0	43.92	0.00

Parish/Charter Trust/Town Council	Precept £	Tax base	Band D £
Norton Malreward	3,700	106.03	34.90
Paulton	190,500	1792.13	106.30
Peasedown St. John	99,210	2204.49	45.00
Priston	3,765	121.76	30.92
Publow	11,000	468.08	23.50
Radstock	151,119	1708.33	88.46
St. Catherine	500	39.96	12.51
Saltford	24,000	1830.28	13.11
Shoscombe	6,594	165.11	39.94
South Stoke	4,860	233.55	20.81
Stanton Drew	6,683	328.45	20.35
Stowey Sutton	16,000	602.48	26.56
Swainswick	2,800	130.22	21.50
Timsbury	23,000	972.93	23.64
Ubley	7,000	167.92	41.69
Wellow	10,138	248.59	40.78
West Harptree	7,000	204.52	34.23
Westfield	161,102	1821.19	88.46
Whitchurch	17,000	463.16	36.70
Total	2,021,090	64422.90	31.37

B&NES Council Tax Rates 2011/12 - including parishes but without Police and Fire**Precept**

£ Parish/Charter Trust	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band
Bath	£805.62	£939.89	£1,074.16	£1,208.43	£1,476.97	£1,74
Bathampton	£822.52	£959.61	£1,096.70	£1,233.79	£1,507.97	£1,78
Batheaston	£820.67	£957.45	£1,094.23	£1,231.01	£1,504.57	£1,77
Bathford	£816.56	£952.66	£1,088.75	£1,224.85	£1,497.04	£1,76
Cameley	£827.62	£965.56	£1,103.50	£1,241.44	£1,517.32	£1,79
Camerton	£826.80	£964.61	£1,102.41	£1,240.21	£1,515.81	£1,79
Charlcombe	£806.01	£940.35	£1,074.68	£1,209.02	£1,477.69	£1,74
Chelwood	£807.21	£941.75	£1,076.28	£1,210.82	£1,479.89	£1,74
Chew Magna	£825.37	£962.93	£1,100.50	£1,238.06	£1,513.19	£1,78
Chew Stoke	£823.42	£960.65	£1,097.89	£1,235.13	£1,509.61	£1,78
Claverton	£836.49	£975.91	£1,115.32	£1,254.74	£1,533.57	£1,8
Clutton	£818.16	£954.52	£1,090.88	£1,227.24	£1,499.96	£1,77
Combe Hay	£859.48	£1,002.72	£1,145.97	£1,289.22	£1,575.72	£1,86
Compton Dando	£817.59	£953.86	£1,090.12	£1,226.39	£1,498.92	£1,77
Compton Martin	£826.77	£964.57	£1,102.36	£1,240.16	£1,515.75	£1,79
Corston	£826.09	£963.77	£1,101.46	£1,239.14	£1,514.51	£1,78
Dunkerton	£820.80	£957.60	£1,094.40	£1,231.20	£1,504.80	£1,77
East Harptree	£818.48	£954.89	£1,091.31	£1,227.72	£1,500.55	£1,77
Englishcombe	£822.38	£959.44	£1,096.51	£1,233.57	£1,507.70	£1,78
Farmborough	£822.52	£959.61	£1,096.70	£1,233.79	£1,507.97	£1,78
Farrington Gurney	£824.02	£961.36	£1,098.70	£1,236.04	£1,510.72	£1,78
Freshford	£833.16	£972.02	£1,110.88	£1,249.74	£1,527.46	£1,80
High Littleton	£820.44	£957.18	£1,093.92	£1,230.66	£1,504.14	£1,77
Hinton Blewett	£821.75	£958.71	£1,095.67	£1,232.63	£1,506.55	£1,78
Hinton Charterhouse	£821.43	£958.34	£1,095.24	£1,232.15	£1,505.96	£1,77
Kelston	£813.54	£949.13	£1,084.72	£1,220.31	£1,491.49	£1,76
Keynsham	£852.93	£995.09	£1,137.24	£1,279.40	£1,563.71	£1,84
Marksbury	£820.64	£957.41	£1,094.19	£1,230.96	£1,504.51	£1,77

B&NES Council Tax Rates 2011/12- including parishes but without Police and Fire**Precept (continued)**

£ Parish/Charter Trust	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band
Midsomer Norton	£860.20	£1,003.57	£1,146.94	£1,290.31	£1,577.05	£1,86
Monkton Combe	£816.20	£952.24	£1,088.27	£1,224.31	£1,496.38	£1,76
Nempnett Thrubwell	£813.42	£949.00	£1,084.57	£1,220.14	£1,491.28	£1,76
Newton St. Loe	£830.91	£969.40	£1,107.88	£1,246.37	£1,523.34	£1,80
North Stoke	£801.23	£934.77	£1,068.31	£1,201.85	£1,468.93	£1,73
Norton Malreward	£824.50	£961.91	£1,099.33	£1,236.75	£1,511.59	£1,78
Paulton	£872.10	£1,017.45	£1,162.80	£1,308.15	£1,598.85	£1,88
Peasedown St. John	£831.23	£969.77	£1,108.31	£1,246.85	£1,523.93	£1,80
Priston	£821.84	£958.82	£1,095.79	£1,232.77	£1,506.72	£1,78
Publow	£816.90	£953.05	£1,089.20	£1,225.35	£1,497.65	£1,76
Radstock	£860.20	£1,003.57	£1,146.94	£1,290.31	£1,577.05	£1,86

St. Catherine	£809.57	£944.50	£1,079.43	£1,214.36	£1,484.22	£1,795.18
Saltford	£809.97	£944.97	£1,079.96	£1,214.96	£1,484.95	£1,795.18
Shoscombe	£827.86	£965.83	£1,103.81	£1,241.79	£1,517.75	£1,795.18
South Stoke	£815.10	£950.96	£1,086.81	£1,222.66	£1,494.36	£1,795.18
Stanton Drew	£814.80	£950.60	£1,086.40	£1,222.20	£1,493.80	£1,795.18
Stowey Sutton	£818.94	£955.43	£1,091.92	£1,228.41	£1,501.39	£1,795.18
Swainswick	£815.56	£951.49	£1,087.42	£1,223.35	£1,495.21	£1,795.18
Timsbury	£816.99	£953.16	£1,089.32	£1,225.49	£1,497.82	£1,795.18
Ubley	£829.02	£967.20	£1,105.37	£1,243.54	£1,519.88	£1,795.18
Wellow	£828.42	£966.49	£1,104.56	£1,242.63	£1,518.77	£1,795.18
West Harptree	£824.05	£961.39	£1,098.74	£1,236.08	£1,510.77	£1,795.18
Westfield	£860.20	£1,003.57	£1,146.94	£1,290.31	£1,577.05	£1,860.20
Whitchurch	£825.70	£963.31	£1,100.93	£1,238.55	£1,513.79	£1,795.18

B&NES Council Tax Rates 2011/12 with Parish, Police and Fire Precept

£ Parish/Charter Trust	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F
Bath	£957.89	£1,117.54	£1,277.19	£1,436.84	£1,756.14	£2,075.84
Bathampton	£974.79	£1,137.26	£1,299.73	£1,462.20	£1,787.14	£2,106.84
Batheaston	£972.94	£1,135.10	£1,297.26	£1,459.42	£1,783.74	£2,103.74
Bathford	£968.83	£1,130.31	£1,291.78	£1,453.26	£1,776.21	£2,099.21
Cameley	£979.89	£1,143.21	£1,306.53	£1,469.85	£1,796.49	£2,116.49
Camerton	£979.07	£1,142.26	£1,305.44	£1,468.62	£1,794.98	£2,115.48
Charlcombe	£958.28	£1,118.00	£1,277.71	£1,437.43	£1,756.86	£2,075.86
Chelwood	£959.48	£1,119.40	£1,279.31	£1,439.23	£1,759.06	£2,077.06
Chew Magna	£977.64	£1,140.58	£1,303.53	£1,466.47	£1,792.36	£2,113.36
Chew Stoke	£975.69	£1,138.30	£1,300.92	£1,463.54	£1,788.78	£2,110.78
Claverton	£988.76	£1,153.56	£1,318.35	£1,483.15	£1,812.74	£2,130.74
Clutton	£970.43	£1,132.17	£1,293.91	£1,455.65	£1,779.13	£2,104.13
Combe Hay	£1,011.75	£1,180.37	£1,349.00	£1,517.63	£1,854.89	£2,191.89
Compton Dando	£969.86	£1,131.51	£1,293.15	£1,454.80	£1,778.09	£2,103.09
Compton Martin	£979.04	£1,142.22	£1,305.39	£1,468.57	£1,794.92	£2,115.92
Corston	£978.36	£1,141.42	£1,304.49	£1,467.55	£1,793.68	£2,114.68
Dunkerton	£973.07	£1,135.25	£1,297.43	£1,459.61	£1,783.97	£2,106.97
East Harptree	£970.75	£1,132.54	£1,294.34	£1,456.13	£1,779.72	£2,103.72
Englishcombe	£974.65	£1,137.09	£1,299.54	£1,461.98	£1,786.87	£2,109.87
Farmborough	£974.79	£1,137.26	£1,299.73	£1,462.20	£1,787.14	£2,110.14
Farrington Gurney	£976.29	£1,139.01	£1,301.73	£1,464.45	£1,789.89	£2,112.89
Freshford	£985.43	£1,149.67	£1,313.91	£1,478.15	£1,806.63	£2,126.63
High Littleton	£972.71	£1,134.83	£1,296.95	£1,459.07	£1,783.31	£2,105.31
Hinton Blewett	£974.02	£1,136.36	£1,298.70	£1,461.04	£1,785.72	£2,107.72
Hinton Charterhouse	£973.70	£1,135.99	£1,298.27	£1,460.56	£1,785.13	£2,106.13
Kelston	£965.81	£1,126.78	£1,287.75	£1,448.72	£1,770.66	£2,090.66
Keynsham	£1,005.20	£1,172.74	£1,340.27	£1,507.81	£1,842.88	£2,182.88

B&NES Council Tax Rates 2011/12 with Parish, Police and Fire Precept

£ Parish/Charter Trust	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F
Marksbury	£972.91	£1,135.06	£1,297.22	£1,459.37	£1,783.68	£2,106.68
Midsomer Norton	£1,012.47	£1,181.22	£1,349.97	£1,518.72	£1,856.22	£2,191.22
Monkton Combe	£968.47	£1,129.89	£1,291.30	£1,452.72	£1,775.55	£2,090.55
Nempnett Thrubwell	£965.69	£1,126.65	£1,287.60	£1,448.55	£1,770.45	£2,085.45
Newton St. Loe	£983.18	£1,147.05	£1,310.91	£1,474.78	£1,802.51	£2,117.51
North Stoke	£953.50	£1,112.42	£1,271.34	£1,430.26	£1,748.10	£2,066.10
Norton Malreward	£976.77	£1,139.56	£1,302.36	£1,465.16	£1,790.76	£2,110.76
Paulton	£1,024.37	£1,195.10	£1,365.83	£1,536.56	£1,878.02	£2,213.02
Peasedown St. John	£983.50	£1,147.42	£1,311.34	£1,475.26	£1,803.10	£2,118.10
Priston	£974.11	£1,136.47	£1,298.82	£1,461.18	£1,785.89	£2,106.89
Publow	£969.17	£1,130.70	£1,292.23	£1,453.76	£1,776.82	£2,101.82

Radstock	£1,012.47	£1,181.22	£1,349.97	£1,518.72	£1,856.22	£2,100.00
St. Catherine	£961.84	£1,122.15	£1,282.46	£1,442.77	£1,763.39	£2,000.00
Saltford	£962.24	£1,122.62	£1,282.99	£1,443.37	£1,764.12	£2,000.00
Shoscombe	£980.13	£1,143.48	£1,306.84	£1,470.20	£1,796.92	£2,100.00
South Stoke	£967.37	£1,128.61	£1,289.84	£1,451.07	£1,773.53	£2,000.00
Stanton Drew	£967.07	£1,128.25	£1,289.43	£1,450.61	£1,772.97	£2,000.00
Stowey Sutton	£971.21	£1,133.08	£1,294.95	£1,456.82	£1,780.56	£2,100.00
Swainswick	£967.83	£1,129.14	£1,290.45	£1,451.76	£1,774.38	£2,000.00
Timsbury	£969.26	£1,130.81	£1,292.35	£1,453.90	£1,776.99	£2,100.00
Ubley	£981.29	£1,144.85	£1,308.40	£1,471.95	£1,799.05	£2,100.00
Wellow	£980.69	£1,144.14	£1,307.59	£1,471.04	£1,797.94	£2,100.00
West Harptree	£976.32	£1,139.04	£1,301.77	£1,464.49	£1,789.94	£2,100.00
Westfield	£1,012.47	£1,181.22	£1,349.97	£1,518.72	£1,856.22	£2,100.00
Whitchurch	£977.97	£1,140.96	£1,303.96	£1,466.96	£1,792.96	£2,100.00

Councillor Questions for Council 15th February 2011

(NOTE: The following questions and answers will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the meeting and linked to the published draft minutes of this meeting.)

1. Question from Councillor Stephen Hedges

1. Could the Cabinet Member say how many people have been on the waiting list for 2008, 2009 and 2010?
2. What is the longest time that the department has identified for a home being empty?
3. How much in budget has been allocated to bringing empty houses into use?
4. What target has the Cabinet Member set for bringing empty homes back into use? That is, coming back into use by direct action from the Council, not by normal means
5. Will he use the Council's compulsory purchase powers to deal with the worst offenders?
6. What if any are, funding streams likely to be forthcoming from the Government to assist in bringing homes back into use?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Housing

1. On 1st April 2008 – 6,560
On 1st April 2009 – 6,990
On 1st April 2010 – 8,800

It should be noted that, in line with the current legislative framework, Bath & North East Somerset has an "open" waiting list and these figures do not represent a measure of housing need in the area. Indeed, many people on the waiting list do not have a current need for housing or even a wish to move at this time.

2. Council Tax Records provide a default date of 2004. However, Housing Services are aware of some properties that have been empty for in excess of 30 years.
3. Housing Services have, following a process of reviewing their strategic priorities in consultation with me, freed up capacity to dedicate 0.5FTE to Empty Property recovery. There is no specific capital budget allocated to empty property recovery. In accordance with our Empty Property Policy any formal recovery action, such as, Compulsory Purchase Orders or Empty Dwelling Management Orders, would require my formal approval and be funded through Housing Services existing funding stream.
4. Suitable, and appropriately benchmarked targets, are to be developed for 1st April 2011.
5. The Empty Property Policy states that:

“Housing Services will then consider the use of enforcement action in the following circumstances:

- (1) The Council has made numerous attempts to engage with the owner, all reasonable offers of assistance have been made to the owner and these offers have not been acted upon; and
- (2) There is no prospect of the house being brought back into use by the owner within a reasonable time period; and
- (3) There is a housing need and/or the property is causing a significant problem in the local neighbourhood: and
- (4) A cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that enforcement action is both financially viable and appropriate.

Enforcement action to bring the property back into use will only be taken when the above criteria is met. Enforcement action with significant financial implications will only be taken following a single member decision by the Executive Member for Adult Social Services & Housing. Should the case for enforcement action not be demonstrated then no enforcement action will be taken.”

As such I will make this decision based upon the facts of the case whilst having regard to the above policy statement.

6. There are two potential funding streams – the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and £100m of Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) funding for Registered Providers (RPs).

We are still waiting for the NHB guidance. However, we expect that the Council would receive a funding bonus equal to 7 years of Council Tax Benefit for the net number of empty properties brought back into use, that is, after offsetting for new properties becoming empty.

The £100m funding stream has been allocated to the Home & Community Agency (HCA). It is for RPs, that is, developing Housing Associations, to bid for this funding and is linked to the new Affordable Rent Tenancy model. The money does not come to the Council and Councils are not eligible to bid. We have written to our local RP partners encouraging them to bid for the funding and offering our assistance.

2. Question from Councillor Brian Webber

Would the Leader of Council please provide a statement on the survey which I believe has been carried out into the condition of Pulteney Bridge?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The routine condition survey recently carried out on the bridge has flagged-up issues with corroding sections of concealed iron which are causing expansion cracking to part of the bridge resulting in relatively localised cracking to the facade.

The primary consideration is to deal with the defects whilst preserving the historic fabric which may mean utilising cathodic protection systems rather than physical intervention/removal.

3. Question from Councillor Brian Webber

How are the discussions with bus companies progressing with regard to extending services along Great Pulteney Street?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The Council is in continuing negotiations with bus operators over the possibility of extending commercial bus services along Great Pulteney Street to Laura Place.

The Bath Bus Company currently operates a 60 minute service along Great Pulteney St., with more services provided during the summer months depending on demand. There is already an outbound bus stop on Great Pulteney St. and a bus stop at Laura Place for passengers to use and the Council is investigating the possibility of providing a new inbound stop near the eastern end of Great Pulteney St. to allow passengers to travel in both directions along Great Pulteney St.

In addition the Council is considering the possibility of increasing Dial a Ride capacity in the area to serve the needs of passengers with reduced mobility.

4. Question from Councillor Brian Webber

When does the Cabinet Member expect to begin public consultation on an updated policy on A-Boards?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

Informal consultations with various stakeholder groups (e.g. Equality B&NES, retailer groups, residents and a number of Elected Members) expressing an interest in the issue of regulating obstructions on footways (including A Boards) has informed a draft policy.

My intention is that the draft policy will be formally consulted on as follows:

Circulate final draft copy to officers (including Legal, Highways and Licensing officers) for comment - week beginning 14th February;

Circulate draft policy for external comment - week beginning 28th February;

Draft policy to go to the Licensing Committee on the 28th March for their comment (as it is proposed that their role will include considering any "objected to" applications);

Consultation to end on the 31st March;

A report will then come to me in April so that I can make a decision on whether to adopt a policy and determine the detail (including fees and charges) behind this.

As the decision will fall into the period leading up to the Council Elections, I will ensure that the Group Leaders are consulted and agree any decision before I take a decision for implementation.

5. Question from Councillor Ian Dewey

Can the Cabinet Member please update me on the progress he has hopefully made on the HGV Ban at Cleveland Bridge. What is the proposed timescale for implementation? What are the possible blockers?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The reason that the Council has not yet been in a position to implement the HGV ban is due to the fact that Cleveland Bridge lies on the Primary Route Network (PRN) in B&NES. The implication of the DfT's interpretation of EU legislation is that before a weight limit can be introduced for environmental reasons, Cleveland Bridge should be removed from the PRN.

Following the publication of the recent White Paper on transport, a consultation has recently commenced on how local communities can take greater control over roads in their area. The consultation document describes a new process by which the Council, as the local highway authority, could decide to remove Cleveland Bridge from the PRN where direct traffic between two locations linked by the PRN is too low to justify a primary route or that the journey of broadly similar convenience is possible through other sections of the PRN.

This is positive move forward which the Council shall be pursuing with a view to implementing a weight limit on Cleveland Bridge.

6. Question from Councillor Ian Dewey

The state of the A4 road between Bath and and the Council's Boundary with Bristol at Hick`s Gate was in a quite appalling state a few days ago with large amounts of litter on the verges and central reservations. I have also been chasing the litter picking of the A46 and A36 in my Ward, without success. Please advise what schedules, if any, are adhered to for this cleaning and who is monitoring the cleanliness. It is not a good advert for Visitors to Bath and NE Somerset.!

Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

An extensive litter pick of the Keynsham bypass was undertaken on Monday/Tuesday 7th/8th February 2011. The Council's Environmental Services Division co-ordinates this work to ensure it is carried out in the safest and most cost-effective way. The two days lane closure and traffic management arrangements for this operation on the Keynsham bypass cost over £2K.

Environmental Services are currently investigating the cost of purchasing the necessary traffic management equipment and putting in place the required safety training to enable the cleansing team to provide a more proactive and timely response to this problem. This would ensure that urban and rural verges and gateways and approaches to Bath and North East Somerset are maintained in an attractive and welcoming manner throughout the year for residents and visitors.

The cleansing schedule for the A46 and A36 is on a 14 day cycle throughout the year, as prescribed in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. Litter picking is normally coordinated as part of grass cutting operations Litter on rural verges, outside of the grass cutting season, is normally dealt with as part of winter scavenging operations by the Council's cleansing team. However in the case of major roads such as the A46 and A36,

where lane closure is required for safety reasons, the situation is more complicated as the Council has to liaise with InterRoute (the Highway Agency's contractor) which slows the response time considerably and adds to the cost.

It is worth emphasising the point that most of the roads mentioned here are under the overall management responsibility of the Highway Agency who provide no funding for local authorities to keep them cleansed and refuse to accept responsibility for cleansing, which means that the cost of clearance falls back on the Council in its role as the principal litter authority.

In order to combat the problem of littering, the Council has also embarked upon a major litter reduction campaign over the past 6 months and is increasing enforcement activity following an educational and publicity campaign.

7. Question from Councillor Ian Dewey

Can I please be informed of the Terms of Reference for the Transport Commission?
When is the first meeting to be held please?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

Draft terms of reference are under consideration by the Chair of the Transport Commission. A further informal meeting is scheduled for Friday 18th February when it is hoped to approve terms of reference, which can then be published.

**LIST OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY COUNCILLORS AT COUNCIL MEETING
15 FEBRUARY 2011**

NUMBER	QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR(S)	QUESTION TO COUNCILLOR(S)	SUBJECT
1	Stephen Hedges	Vic Pritchard	Housing Waiting List and Empty Homes
2	Brian Webber	Charles Gerrish	Condition Survey of Pulteney Bridge, Bath
3	Brian Webber	Charles Gerrish	Extending Bus Services on Great Pulteney Street, Bath
4	Brian Webber	Charles Gerrish	Public Consultation on Updated A-Boards Policy
5	Ian Dewey	Charles Gerrish	Heavy Goods Vehicle Ban at Cleveland Bridge, Bath
6	Ian Dewey	Charles Gerrish	Litter on Roadside Verges and Central Reservations on A4, A36 and A46
7	Ian Dewey	Charles Gerrish	Transport Commission Terms of Reference and Initial Meeting

COUNCIL MEETING 15TH FEBRUARY 2011

STATEMENT FROM CLLR ELEANOR JACKSON ABOUT PLANNING ENFORCEMENT IN RADSTOCK WARD

I wonder how many councillors here first learnt their debating skills justifying or refuting the motion that 'The ends justify the means.' Famously exploited by Reichkanzler Otto von Bismarck, when he launched wars against Austria and France in order to bring the German states together into one nation, it has a long ancestry back through Metternich and Machiavelli and beyond. However, at this time of night even I have not got the energy to give a lecture on political ethics, even if you wanted to hear it. The point is that we may have agreed tonight that cuts are necessary, that we have to balance the budget and that we have to do it within a narrow time frame. But if you prune a diseased tree too hard, you kill it off altogether. To demonstrate what I mean, let us consider the situation after the 2010 cuts. The result is to leave the core staffing of B&NES dangerously weak and exposed because there are some services which even the most enthusiastic volunteers cannot provide. This particularly applies to planning and enforcement, where staff have been reduced to the point where they cannot deliver decisions to deadlines, and the enforcement team is more or less reduced, metaphorically speaking, to three trained staff and a dog. The frequent turn over of staff does not help, nor the amount of stress -related illnesses cuts cause to the over-worked survivors.

Perhaps Radstock is singularly afflicted with rogue developers and scrap metal merchants. Perhaps we are unique in having cases which have dragged out for decades despite planning inspectors' rulings that the land be restored to what it was, but I doubt if that is so. Many of us are aware of the uproar about Woolley Valley and Fuller's Earth. But hopefully it is only in so-called 'bandit country' that officers and councillors are threatened with violence when an enforcement decision is upheld.

In my ward there are a number of long-running disputes which are like infected sores. Radstock people do not have the means to take legal action to defend their property or their amenities, or in one case the whole natural environment of a settlement which has its roots in Roman times. It makes me wonder how much it is appreciated that if the law is undermined in a few notorious cases, the law as a whole is brought into disrepute. And here I would urge that no council contracts are given to companies which break planning law or environmental health regulations. Economic sanctions may work where inspectors' rulings are ignored. But the bottom line is that more properly qualified staff are needed, especially with the 25% increase in planning applications in recent months. Compared with the privatisation of the NHS, the increased costs of homecare, the loss of EMA and the tripling of university fees, planning and enforcement may seem small beer, but for of us on the ground, planning problems cause more agitation than anything else. If localism means anything –or 'the big society'- then the council should listen to local community groups and act. URGENTLY!

